

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocols

January/February 2003

Dear High School Principal:

As you may know, Assembly Bill (AB) 1609 (Ch. 716, Statutes of 2001) requires that an independent study be conducted to determine whether the Class of 2004 should be held accountable on the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), who is the independent evaluator for the CAHSEE, is conducting this study of the implementation of standards-based instruction. HumRRO is required to make a recommendation to the State Board of Education based on its independent assessment. After reviewing study results, the SBE may—or may not—decide to delay CAHSEE accountability for the Class of 2004.

The study has two parts. The first part is a survey that is being sent to 1,200 schools (600 high schools and a main feeder middle school/junior high for each of the 600 high schools). While a selected high school may not be representative of its district, the 600 high schools were carefully selected to be representative of the state as a whole. The second part of the study involves a follow-up site visit to a subsample of approximately 70 schools (40–50 high schools and 20–30 feeder middle schools/junior highs). The site visits will allow researchers to obtain more detailed information about standards-based instruction.

Your school has been selected to take part in both parts of this study. You will receive a survey packet in the next week, and we hope that you will respond promptly. For the site visit, HumRRO researchers will visit your school for one day. Please expect a phone call soon to set up a visit date.

1. The HumRRO site visit team would like to **interview** the following people while at your school:
 - The person who completes Part 1 of the survey. Typically, this will be either the principal or a vice principal of instruction or curriculum.
 - 1–3 math and 1–3 English-language arts teachers whose courses prepare students for the CAHSEE, such as Algebra 1 or 9th grade English. Due to time restraints, we regret that we cannot interview teachers whose courses are beyond the scope of the CAHSEE, such as AP English or Calculus.
 - 1–2 teachers who teach CAHSEE remediation classes in mathematics and English-language arts. Typically, these courses are for students who have taken but not passed at least one part of the CAHSEE.
 - 1–2 special education teachers of students who are working towards a high school diploma.
 - 1–2 teachers who work with students classified as English Language Learners.
 - If time permits, we would like to interview 1–2 teachers involved in special tutoring or after-school education programs.

Teacher interviews will last about 30 minutes and can take place at the teacher's convenience, such as during a planning period or after school. We request that teachers bring their textbooks and other commercial/packaged instructional materials to their interviews, as well as any documents that show how the California Content Standards are being covered.

2. We also are interested in obtaining the **names of students who were enrolled in a CAHSEE remediation class** during the 2001–02 academic year, the 2002 summer school session, or the fall 2002 semester and who then retook the CAHSEE in July, September, or November, 2002 or January 2003. This will help us determine the impact that CAHSEE remediation courses may have on subsequent CAHSEE pass rates. While we will not use student names in this study, the names are needed so we can link them to their later CAHSEE scores. California Education Code 49076(a)3 allows “state education officials, or their respective designees” access to pupil records “where the information is necessary to audit or evaluate a state or federally mandated program” while requiring that such data be protected from release and destroyed when no longer needed. If you are able to provide these student names, we ask that you prepare them before our arrival.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important endeavor. For questions regarding HumRRO's visit, please contact Pat Ford at (831) 647-9650 or email him at jpford@montereybay.com or for more information you can contact Dr. Carolyn Harris at HumRRO's Virginia office (800-301-1508 or charris@humrro.org).

Sincerely,

Pat Ford

January/February 2003

Dear Middle School Principal:

As you may know, Assembly Bill (AB) 1609 (Ch. 716, Statutes of 2001) requires that an independent study be conducted to determine whether the Class of 2004 should be held accountable on the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), who is the independent evaluator for the CAHSEE, is conducting this study of the implementation of standards-based instruction. HumRRO is required to make a recommendation to the State Board of Education based on its independent assessment. After reviewing study results, the SBE may—or may not—decide to delay CAHSEE accountability for the Class of 2004.

The study has two parts. The first part is a survey that is being sent to 1,200 schools (600 high schools and a main feeder middle school/junior high for each of the 600 high schools). While a selected high school may not be representative of its district, the 600 high schools were carefully selected to be representative of the state as a whole. The second part of the study involves a follow-up site visit to a subsample of approximately 70 schools (40–50 high schools and 20–30 feeder middle schools/junior highs). The site visits will allow researchers to obtain more detailed information about standards-based instruction .

Your school has been selected to take part in both parts of this study. You will receive a survey packet in the next week, and we hope that you will respond promptly. For the site visit, HumRRO researchers will visit your school for one day. Please expect a phone call soon to set up a visit date.

The HumRRO site visit team would like to **interview** the following people while at your school:

- The person who completes Part 1 of the survey. Typically, this will be either the principal or a vice principal of instruction or curriculum.
- 1–2 math and 1–2 English-language arts teachers whose courses cover the California Content Standards for grades 6–9 (as appropriate to your school).
- 1–2 teachers who teach remediation classes in mathematics and English-language arts. Typically, these courses are for students who are at risk of falling behind in mastering the California Content Standards for ELA and mathematics in grades 6–9.
- 1–2 special education teachers of students in grades 6–9 who are likely to work towards a diploma in high school.
- 1–2 teachers who work with students in grades 6–9 classified as English Language Learners.
- If time permits, we would like to interview 1–2 teachers involved in special tutoring or after-school education programs for students in grades 6–9 .

Teacher interviews will last about 30 minutes and can take place at the teacher's convenience, such as during a planning period or after school. We request that teachers bring their textbooks and other commercial/packaged instructional materials to their interviews, as well as any documents that show how the California Content Standards are being covered.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important endeavor. For questions regarding HumRRO's visit, please contact Pat Ford at (831) 647-9650 or email him at jpford@montereybay.com or for more information you can contact Dr. Carolyn Harris at HumRRO's Virginia office (800-301-1508 or charris@humrro.org).

Sincerely,

Pat Ford

Principal Interview Questions

Introduction

(You will be interviewing the principal or someone appointed by the principal, such as a vice principal for curriculum or instruction.)

You will need to explain the purpose of the visit—that HumRRO is the independent evaluator hired by California Department of Education. Specifically, this study (AB 1609) will provide information to the State Board of Education, and the SBE will use it to determine whether to hold the Class of 2004 accountable on the CAHSEE or to delay accountability. Remind them that the surveys they received are a part of this study, and that we are visiting a sampling of surveyed schools so we can get more in-depth information.

Standards-based instruction

Definition

First of all, I'd like you to tell me in your own words what is standards-based instruction? Based on that definition, do you think that your school is implementing standards-based instruction?

When did this process start (academic year)?

Implementation rating

How far are you in this process of implementing standards-based instruction (1 not at all, 5 completely implemented).

When do you think it will be fully in effect?

Is there a system in place that allows administrators or teachers to monitor student mastery of the standards? How does that work? Was this developed by the district, the school, or individual teachers?

What happens to students who do not master the standards? Anything in place to assist them?

Curriculum issues

Have there been any changes made to the regular math and English/Language Arts (ELA) curriculum in response to standards-based instruction in general? To CAHSEE, more specifically? (Look for things like adding/deleting certain courses.)

When did these curriculum changes come about (academic year)?

Are any more curriculum changes anticipated in response to standards-based instruction or CAHSEE?

What has happened to courses beyond the scope of CAHSEE as a result of curriculum changes made in response to standards-based instruction/CAHSEE?

Have any math/ELA remediation courses been added or changed significantly in response to standards-based instruction/CAHSEE?

How are students placed in these courses (optional or required)?

Student preparation issues

Incoming students

Have there been any changes in student preparation of incoming students since the development of the CA Content Standards (better/less prepared than previously?)

Given what you see in the prep level of your incoming students, where in the process of implementing standards-based instruction do you think your feeder school is?

How long will it take for you and your feeder school to be working together in fully implementing the CA Content Standards?

What will have to happen to make sure that (working together) happens?

Within your school

I'd like to ask about the work that takes place within the math and ELA departments to prepare students for the next level or course—how is that done? Formal or informal? What do teachers use to connect instruction from one year to the next?

Do teachers at this school have copies of the California Content Standards/Blueprints? Are they using the standards to help plan instruction?

Student subpopulations

What student subpopulations do you have at this school?

Have you seen any (positive or negative) changes in their general academic performance since the development and implementation of the CA Content Standards/standards-based instruction? (High schools only--) In their performance on the CAHSEE?

Have you seen any changes in motivation, drop out rates, etc. since CAHSEE? What will happen to motivation, drop out rates when CAHSEE is put into effect?

How do you coordinate coverage of the Content Standards between the following groups?

Middle school/high school

Special ed/general ed

EL staff/general ed

Alternative (continuation)/general ed

Of those four paired groups, for which pairing is it easiest/most difficult to coordinate coverage?

Challenges

Challenges (issues like low attendance, motivation, English proficiency, parental support, materials/resources, trained instructors) school has had to overcome (or still is in process of overcoming) in implementing standards-based instruction. How were/are these challenges overcome?

Anything else...

Is there anything else you would like to add?

English/Math Teachers Interview Questions

Introduction—why we’re here and what we’re doing

The company that I work for—the Human Resources Research Organization, or HumRRO—has been hired by the California Department of Education as the independent evaluator for the CAHSEE. We are interested in learning about how California schools are using standards-based instruction in classes and what impact that may have on the California High School Exit Exam. Basically, we’re trying to find out if the Class of 2004 is ready to be held accountable for the CAHSEE, or if the CAHSEE should be delayed. The State Board of Education will make the final decision on that.

We’re interviewing teachers who are teaching courses that contain content that may be included on the CAHSEE, such as Algebra 1 and below for math teachers or the standard English courses of 10th grade and below—not courses like AP English or Calculus.

Course description

We’d like to start by asking you to tell us about the course you teach that prepares your students for the CAHSEE—

Course name/grade level

How many sections of this course do you teach? How many sections of this course are there in total?

What type of student takes this specific course? If I went and observed a section, who would I see in class? Would I see a variety of student abilities in a single section, or would students be in similar ability groupings? Any ELL or special ed (mainstreamed) students?

What books/other commercial material do you use? (Get name of text/publisher/year published and adopted at this school and whether it is aligned to the California Content Standards).

Do all teachers of this course use the same materials, or is there a certain amount of flexibility in choice of materials?

Standards-based instruction

Definition

When you hear the expression “standards-based instruction,” what does it mean to you? Can you define that term for me?

Based on that definition, does this course use standards-based instruction?

When did this course begin using standards-based instruction?

Show them the CAHSEE blueprints and the California Content Standards—ask if they have a copy of them and if they use them in planning instruction. If they don’t use them, ask if they use anything else.

Implementation rating

I'd like you to rate the level of implementation of standards-based instruction in this course (1-5 scale—1 not at all implemented, 5 completely implemented).

Use across and within grades

Has the instruction in earlier grades prepared students for this course?

- How much time (class periods) do you spend at the beginning of the school year teaching concepts for the first time that they should already know? (Make sure teachers understand the difference between the normal “beginning of the school year” review and first-time instruction on concepts they should already know.)

When students leave this class, are they prepared to jump right in to the follow-on course, or will that teacher have to spend time teaching concepts the students should already know?

- How do you ensure coverage across grades? Describe any communication or coordination between grades/courses that takes place.

I asked earlier if materials used differed among teachers of this course, and now I'd like to ask if sections of this course differ in any other ways among teachers...(they may describe different instructional methods, for example...)

- How does a teacher go about designing the course? Work with other teachers? Use anything as a guideline?
- If next year the teacher of the follow-on course gets some of your former students and some of another teacher's former students, will those students be similarly prepared? Describe any communication or coordination within this course that takes place.

Do teachers in this course keep track of the standards that are being covered? Do teachers also look beyond coverage to mastery of standards? What is done for those students who do not master a particular standard?

Student preparation

Have you seen any changes for better or worse in the level of student preparation for this course since your school implemented standards-based instruction?

Think about the Class of 2004—the current juniors. When they were taking this course or equivalent, were similar standards covered in their instruction? What about for the Classes of 2005 and 2006?

Challenges

What challenges does a teacher at this school face in preparing students for the CAHSEE/ or in using standards-based instruction at this time?

How is the school working to overcome these challenges?

What about any staff development to address these challenges?

Is progress being made?

How long realistically will it take to overcome these challenges? (This is the low motivation, low attendance, low English proficiency, low parental support, lack of materials/resources, and lack of trained instructors question, plus any others they volunteer.)

Anything else...

Is there anything that you would like to add?

Special Education Teacher Interview Questions

(Interviewer info: California typically classifies special education students as “special day” students if they are severely handicapped and are pretty much not working toward a high school diploma. “Resource” students are those who are able to work in regular classrooms—“mainstreamed”—for at least ½ of the school day. They may need special support—aides, etc.—while in the regular classroom. We’re mostly focusing our attention on the resource students, as some of them are working toward a high school diploma.)

Special ed numbers

What percent of students at this school receive special education services—ask them to break out by resource and by special day.

What percentage of the resource students are able to be mainstreamed (with support) in math? In ELA? (So these students would be exposed to CA content standards for whatever grade they are in, is that correct?) What percentage of the special day students are able to be mainstreamed (with support) in math? In ELA?

CA content standards issues

I know that special education students have IEPs (Individual Education Plans) that guide student education—does the special education department use the CA Content Standards in developing a student’s IEP? How does the department use those standards? (If the department doesn’t use the CA Content Standards, ask if they use anything else.)

How familiar are you with the CAHSEE, the CA content standards, and the blueprints for math/ELA (show them your copies...)?

How does the department keep track of the mastery (note: make a distinction between mastery and simply being exposed to the standards) of the standards? So at any given time, the department can determine “where” a student is in terms of mastery?

Is there any particular content that these students will likely not have been exposed to by the time they take the CAHSEE for the first time?

Is there any particular content that these students will likely not have mastered by the time they take the CAHSEE for the first time?

High school only

Does the department provide any extra support or assistance if a special ed student does not pass a portion of the CAHSEE? Tell me about that...

Of your current students, how many have taken the CAHSEE? How many have passed it? How many do you expect will pass it eventually?

Middle school only

How aware of the CAHSEE are special ed teachers at the middle school level?

Anything else?

ELL/ELD Teacher Interview Questions

(A school’s English Language Learner—ELL—program can also be called “sheltered language” or English Language Development—ELD. Depending on the needs of students, it has about four levels ranging from the “intro to English” classes to more advanced English courses for those who have moved beyond the intro classes. I would imagine that some schools may not have all four levels, while others would. The EL program has its own CA content standards. Students must take the CAHSEE in English.)

Program description

Tell me about your school’s ELL program...

Numbers taking part

How many students at this school are ELL students (ask to break down by levels—how many at the earliest stages of learning English through nearly mastery)?

Materials used

What texts/materials are used in this course? (If they have the materials with them, note text name/publisher, date of publication, if aligned to CA content standards, and when adopted.)

CA content standards issues

Familiarity

How familiar are EL teachers at this school with the CAHSEE and the blueprints for ELA and the CA content standards (show them your copies)?

Integration of standards

How does the EL program integrate the CA content standards into the curriculum?

Differences

How much difference is there between the ELD content standards and the regular (ELA) content standards?

Coverage by level

For each level, how much of the regular CA content standards are students able to cover?

Preparation for test

Is there anything specific that the EL department does to help students prepare for the CAHSEE?

Any specific test-prep activities, such as working with generic testing vocabulary?

If so, when were these activities developed? How were the activities developed? What did the department use to help develop the curriculum?

Prediction

What will happen to your current students if CAHSEE is maintained for the Class of 2004?

Anything else?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

For middle school ELL teachers: Ask the above questions and this:

How aware of the CAHSEE are ELL teachers at the middle school level?

CAHSEE Remediation Teacher Interview Questions

(This interview is directed toward those teachers who are working with students—probably mostly juniors—who have already failed one or both parts of the CAHSEE. It is possible that not all schools will have these CAHSEE remediation courses, however. You may also be asked to interview teachers who work with students who the school considers to be in danger of not passing the CAHSEE, although they haven't taken the test yet. If you are, please use the protocol titled "Special programs".)

Program description

How many students are currently taking this math/English CAHSEE remediation course?

How is a student placed in a CAHSEE remediation class at this school (voluntary or required?)

If attendance is voluntary, are there any challenges in getting students to take the course?

When is the first opportunity that a student would have to be placed in a CAHSEE remediation class? (summer session? First semester of the next school year?)

Does this course count as an elective or as a math/ELA credit toward graduation?

How many times can a student take the remediation class? What does that do to the opportunity to take other courses a student may need?

What materials are used in the course? (Get text name/publisher/date published/adopted, whether aligned to CA content standards)

Program development

How was the curriculum developed for this course? What was used to determine what content would be covered? When was it developed? Is it self-paced or taught to the class as a whole?

Standards-based instruction

How familiar are teachers of this course with the CAHSEE, the CA content standards, and the blueprints for math/ELA? (Show your copies...) Have you ever seen sample CAHSEE questions?

What does standards-based instruction mean to you? Can you give me a definition?

Based on that definition, is this course implementing standards-based instruction?

Evaluation

Are any records kept on student performance on CAHSEE after having had the remediation course? (Do some students retake CAHSEE without the remediation course and others after the remediation course?)

Subpopulations

Do students in the remediation course cut across the school population as a whole, or do they appear to be clustered in a few subpopulations? If the second scenario is the case, is there anything special the school is doing to address this issue? Explain...

Anything else?

Special Programs Teacher Interview Questions

(This protocol is for those teachers who either work with students who are considered to be at risk of not passing the CAHSEE—although they haven’t taken it yet—or those teachers who are involved with special tutoring to help prepare students for the CAHSEE. These courses/programs may not be as structured as the CAHSEE remediation courses.)

Program description

Tell me about the program—how long does it last (a few weeks? An entire semester?), when does it meet, how many students regularly take part?

Student targeting

How are students targeted for this program?

Voluntary/required?

Is it voluntary or required? Any credit for taking it?

Student subpopulation

Do students from a cross section of the school’s population take this, or do you see mostly students from a particular subpopulation? If so, what subpopulation do you work with in this program?

Program design

How was this program designed? Did the designers use the CA content standards in setting up the curriculum or something else?

Materials

What texts/materials does the program use? (Try to get name of text/publisher, year published/adopted, whether aligned to CA content standards.)

Evaluation

Has the school been able to measure the program’s success yet? (If they answer “too early yet,” follow up with “Are there any plans to do so?”)

Pass potential

What proportion of the students in this program are likely to pass the CAHSEE?

Challenges

What challenges does this program face—student participation/attendance (if voluntary), transportation, financial, etc.

When you talk to these students about the CAHSEE, what do they say about it—what do they say they will do if they don’t pass it? Are they nervous?

Anything else?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

